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RIGHTS OF PERSONS BELONGING TO NATIONAL OR ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS AND LINGUISTIC MINORITIES

Report prepared by the Secretary-General pursuant to Commission on Human Rights resolution 1993/24

Corrigendum

Reply of Greece

After the words "(a) The principle of reciprocity:" insert the following:

According to the provisions of Articles 37-44, Turkey is obliged to respect the freedom of religion and the right of Greek citizens settled in Turkey and of Greek Orthodox residents of Istanbul and the aforementioned islands to speak their own language. In exchange, Greece is obliged to respect the same rights and freedoms for the Muslim Greek citizens of Thrace, of Turkish, Pomak or Roma (gypsy) origin.

After the words: "(b) The principle of the numerical balance of the populations that would not be exchanged:" insert the following new paragraphs:

On the grounds that in 1922 there were 270,000 Greeks in Istanbul while the Muslims in Thrace did not exceed 86,000, the Turkish side, in the course of the negotiations in Lausanne, asked for an increase of the Greek population that was to leave Turkey so that a balance could be established between the two popu.ations.

However, the Muslim minority, which in 1929 numbered 86,000, has now increased to 115,000. It consists of three groups that have resided in Thrace for centuries. After the Ottoman era, this population became part of the population of Greece.

Today, as in 1922, the Muslim minority of Thrace, is not of a homogeneous origin. Fifty per cent is of Turkish origin, 35 per cent are Pomaks (an ancient Thracian population that espoused Islam after the Ottoman conquest) and 15 per cent are Roma (Gypsies). In the light of its diverse ethnic composition, the drafters of the Lausanne Treaty preferred to highlight the uniform religious character of this minority and referred to it simply as a "Muslim minority".